

VZCZCXRO6894
OO RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHDIR RUEHKUK
DE RUEHTH #0201 0441220
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 131220Z FEB 08
FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1199
INFO RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 000201

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/13/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [UNSC](#) [KDEM](#) [IR](#) [GR](#)
SUBJECT: IRAN ELECTIONS: GREECE PREFERS EU STATEMENT IN
ADVANCE

REF: SECSTATE 13345

Classified By: DEPPOLCOUNS PAUL CARTER. REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) On February 12, DepPolCouns delivered reftel points on Iranian elections and a third sanctions resolution to MFA A6 Directorate for Middle East Affairs deputy head Giorgos Ayfantis. PolOff also delivered sanctions points to MFA D1 Directorate for International Organizations, which handles non-proliferation issues. The Greek response to the sanctions demarche will be reported later septel.

¶2. (C) Ayfantis said the issue of Iranian elections required formation of a common EU position. The EU, he said, regarded formation of the European position on the elections as its prerogative and had asked heads of missions in Tehran to table proposals on how best to reach the Iranian population. The issue was likely to be discussed at next week's GAERC meeting, though Ayfantis was doubtful there would be agreed conclusions because it was still early in the Iranian election process.

¶3. (C) As for the Greek position, Ayfantis said Greece recognized that there were risks in trying to appeal to the Iranian population over the heads of the regime. Nevertheless, it was evident that there was widespread dissatisfaction, which reduced the risks of a regime backlash. Also, the regime thus far was allowing assemblies.

¶4. (C) Ayfantis said it was important to wait to see how the situation developed. The Iranian election process had few preliminaries and only got into full swing shortly before election day. The problem was that the Iranian regime tended to approach elections the way the Russians have: the balloting on election day was generally free and fair, but problematic candidates were usually eliminated in advance using various registration tricks, etc. Greece would like to wait to see whether such shenanigans were taking place this time before taking any action.

¶5. (C) Finally, Ayfantis noted that Greece would prefer not to wait until after the elections for the EU to state its position. A statement prior to the elections -- but once the situation on the ground became clearer -- would serve to give notice to the regime of European expectations and to alert the Iranian population to the situation. If the situation was developing poorly, Greece would advocate condemning the entire process.
SPECKHARD